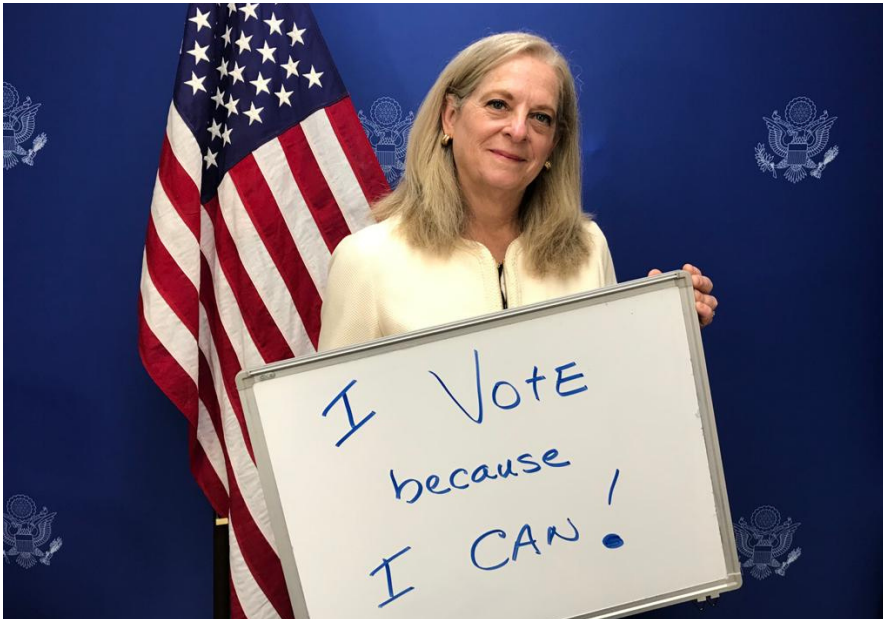


THE DIWANIYA DIGEST

*The official American Citizen Services newsletter of
U.S. Embassy Kuwait*



FROM THE AMBASSADOR'S DESK



Kuwait, much like the rest of the world, continues to grapple with the immediate impact and far-reaching consequences of COVID-19. These past few months have been particularly challenging as we have navigated lockdowns, curfews, airport closures, and disruptions to everyday life. I am proud of your

resilience during these times. I know this has not been easy, and I understand the difficulties of being far from family and friends as we emerge from this crisis and transition through Kuwait's five-phased reopening plan.

The Embassy's own re-opening plan is tied to the local conditions in Kuwait. That is why we have slowly been resuming consular services while taking safety precautions to protect our staff and customers.

We are in the midst of an election season. There are less than 50 days until the General Election on November 3. But just because you are not currently in the United States does not mean you cannot have your voice heard. I have already requested my absentee ballot from Washington, D.C. and encourage you all to do the same if you have not already done so.

I hope I will have the chance to meet with you all soon, either virtually or in-person!

Ambassador Alina Romanowski

EMBASSY HOSTS FIRST VIRTUAL TOWN HALL

Ambassador Romanowski and Consular Section hosted a virtual town hall for American citizens in Kuwait on August 25, with more than 190 people participating in the live program. During the session, the Consular section provided answers about voting overseas, Kuwait's visa procedures, and concerns about COVID-19.



For those of you who were able to attend our virtual town hall, thank you for your participation. We appreciated the opportunity to hear your questions and concerns and to learn about your experiences with the Embassy's American Citizen Services section. We take your feedback seriously and are constantly striving for ways to improve our services.

We have compiled the most frequently asked questions and answers below. Please email us at KuwaitACS@state.gov if you have any questions that were not answered and monitor our [COVID-19 webpage](#) for constant updates.

- **Can I register to vote at the Embassy?**

No. Elections are run at the state level. You may submit your voting registration material at the Embassy for mailing to the U.S. If your state requires you to return paper voting forms or ballots to local election officials by mail, you may drop off materials at the Embassy Sunday through Wednesday from 1:00pm to 2:30pm.

- **Can you offer fingerprinting as part of the services of ACS to allow teachers to renew their licenses?**

Unfortunately, the U.S. Embassy does not provide fingerprinting services.

- **Can I attest or notarize birth, marriage, and divorce certificates locally at the Embassy?**

Unfortunately this is not a service we can provide. These vital records documents are maintained by state governments, not the federal government. The U.S. Embassy does not have access to these records and therefore they must be authenticated in the United States where they were created. We cannot attest vital records documents.

- **Will contractors who are currently outside of Kuwait be able to return for work?**

Only if they have valid visas or residencies. They will not be able to obtain a visa upon arrival at the airport.

- **A lot of testing centers in the United States do not guarantee that PCR testing results will be available within a certain window. Could you please give clarification on the 96-hour PCR test validity?**

The clock starts when the test is administered. You must board your flight to Kuwait within 96 hours of the test being administered. See requirements on our website at kw.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/

- **We're flying back home to the States. Do we still need to do a PCR test since the United States does not require it?**

Passengers traveling to the United States do not require a PCR test to depart Kuwait but are encouraged to check PCR requirements for airlines and any transit destinations. All passengers must also register with the Kuwait *Mosafir* application before departing.

- **How will the Government of Kuwait's decision to not issue work permits to those 60 years of age and older without post-secondary education affect Department of Defense contractors working in Kuwait?**

It is our understanding that U.S. citizen contractors over 60-years-old who do not have post-secondary degrees will not be able to renew their residencies after January 1, 2021.

- **Can I renew my passport nine months before it expires to renew my Kuwaiti residency?**

Yes, you may renew your passport at any time. Details are available on our [website](#).

- **Has the Kuwaiti government indicated when visit visas upon arrival may be available again?**

The government of Kuwait has not indicated when visit visas will be available again or when general visa processing for Kuwait will resume. We requested guidance from the Government of Kuwait on how U.S. citizens with emergency or critical travel needs can obtain visas to Kuwait at this time and are still waiting on a response.

ONGOING CONSULAR SERVICES

As of September 8, a total of 11 passport agencies and centers are in phase two and 15 agencies and centers in phase one of our three-phase reopening plan.

Ballot collection for voting-related materials has resumed.

The processing and shipping of new, full-validity passports and Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBAs) have resumed on a limited basis. Visit our website to schedule an appointment.

Limited appointments are available for urgent notarial services only. Visit our website to schedule an appointment.

All routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa appointments remain temporarily suspended. Only official government, emergency, and student visas are currently being processed.

KUWAIT TOURIST VISAS EXTENDED

The Government of Kuwait has automatically extended all tourist visas and residencies until November 30, 2020. U.S. citizens in Kuwait are recommended to work with their sponsors or employers to renew their residencies or adjust their legal status to an appropriate residency category, if eligible, before November 30. Otherwise, individuals on tourist visas should prepare to depart Kuwait before November 30.

2020 ELECTION: VOTING FROM KUWAIT



There are less than 50 days left until the General Election on November 3!

Whether you are a first-time voter or have already received ballots and voted absentee in past elections, we recommend that you complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) each year to ensure you are able to participate in elections as an overseas absentee voter.

Register and Request an Absentee Ballot

The online voting assistant available at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) is an easy way to complete the FPCA. Now all U.S. citizens can receive their blank ballots electronically. Print, sign, and send the form to your local election office as soon as possible.

Depending on the state in which you are eligible to vote, you may get your ballot by email, fax, or internet download. Absentee ballot application deadlines vary from a few days to three weeks before election day – depending on the state. However, to ensure your ballot is received by the state deadline, we encourage you to apply early.

Vote and Return your Ballot

Once you have received your absentee ballot, vote and return your completed, signed ballot as soon as you receive it. We recommend you return your completed ballot electronically if your state allows it.

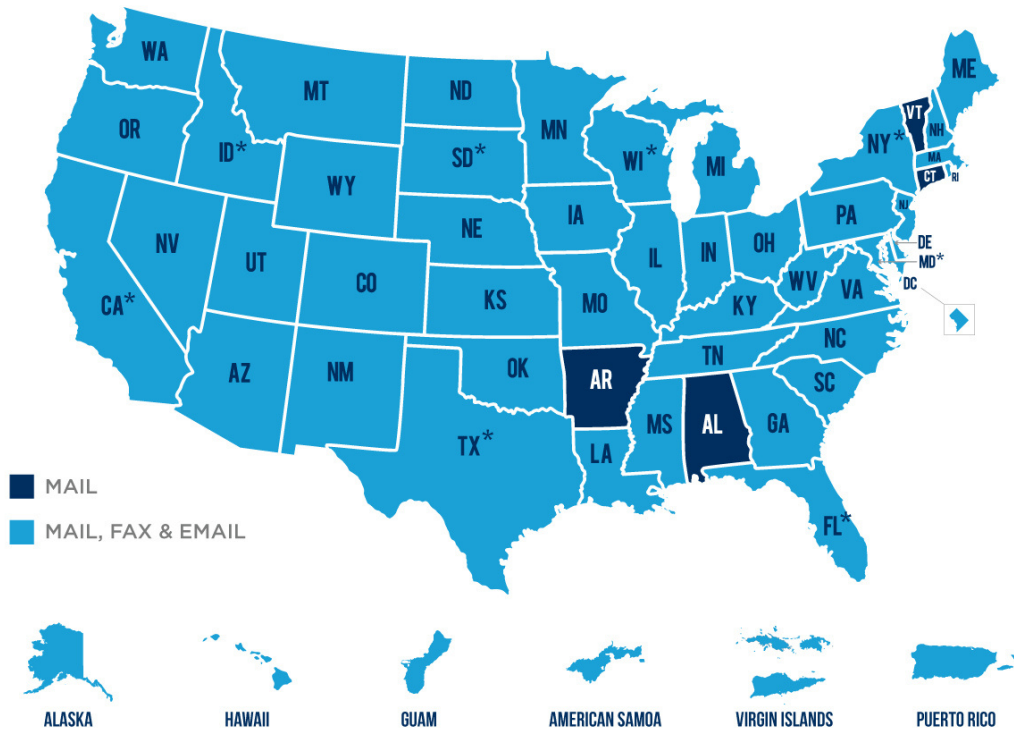
If you are mailing back your ballot, we recommend that you do so by October 12 to ensure timely delivery.

You may drop your ballot off at the Embassy between Sunday through Wednesday from 1:00pm to 2:30pm, and we'll mail it to your election official free of charge, postage-paid envelope included! No appointment is needed. Please email us at VoteKuwait@state.gov if you are unable to drop off voting materials during this time.

HOW VOTERS CAN SUBMIT THIER

FPCA

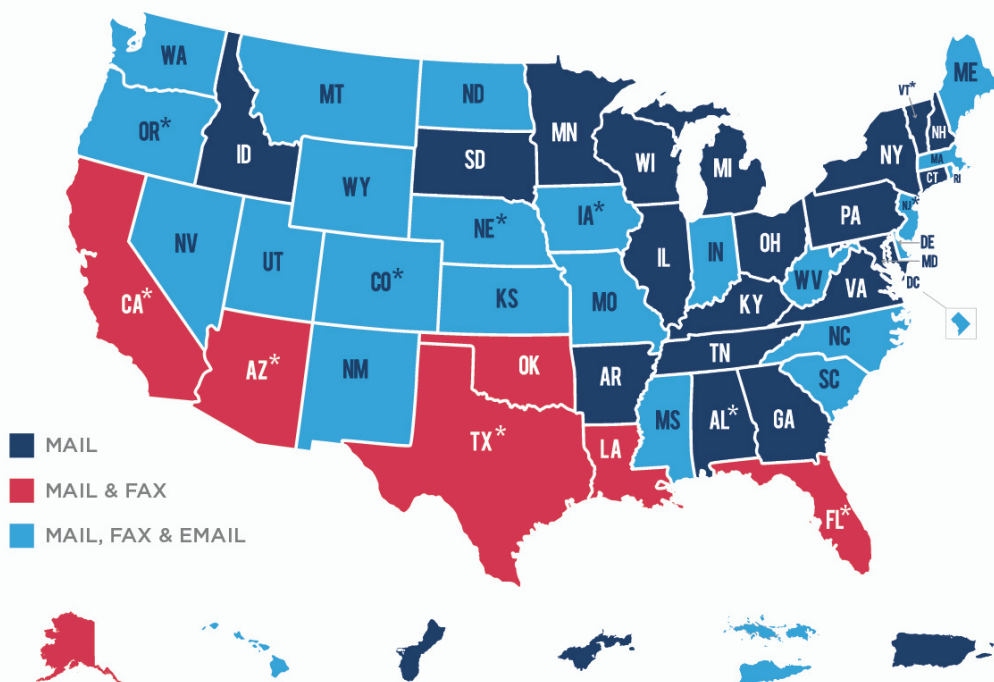
FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION



HOW VOTERS CAN SUBMIT THEIR

BALLOT OR FWAB

FEDERAL WRITE-IN ABSENTEE BALLOT



FAQs ABOUT ABSENTEE VOTING

- **When will I get my ballot?**

Election offices are required to send absentee ballots at least 45 days before a federal election. If you requested your ballot by email, then the ballot should arrive right away.

- **What if I do not get a ballot?**

If you do not receive an absentee ballot in time to return it to your state, you can use the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) as a backup ballot to vote for federal offices. If your official absentee ballot arrives after you send in the FWAB, then you can fill out and send in the official ballot as well. Your state will count only one.

- **Do I need to mail my ballot back?**

While absentee ballots can be mailed to the United States, many states also accept online registration and votes via email. To learn more about state-specific overseas voting guidelines, registration deadlines, and election dates, please visit [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov).

- **Can I use any envelope to mail my form?**

Yes. Print the postage-paid template from [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov) onto any available blank envelope. The Embassy also has envelopes for your use. Please note that some states require you to place ballots and FWABs inside an anonymous security/secret envelope.

- **How do I check the status of my application?**

Contact your election office directly to confirm that your form was processed successfully. FVAP does not have access to your registration information.

- **When should I return my completed ballot if I'm mailing it back?**

We recommend you mail back your ballot by October 12 to ensure timely delivery. Please note that it can take up to three weeks for mail to reach its destination if sent through the Embassy, so please submit your forms and ballots accordingly.



HOW TO VOTE FROM ANYWHERE IN 2 Simple Steps...

WHEN YOU'RE AN AMERICAN OVERSEAS

ACROSS THE POND?
NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE, YOU CAN VOTE.

If you're an American living abroad, you can have your absentee ballot sent to you.

HERE'S HOW:

STEP
1

FILL OUT THE FEDERAL POST CARD APPLICATION (FPCA) AT FVAP.GOV TO REGISTER AND REQUEST YOUR BALLOT

WHEN?

Send it to your election office by **August 1** (or later depending on your state) for the General Election on November 3, 2020.

STEP
2

FILL OUT AND SEND IN YOUR BALLOT WHEN IT ARRIVES

WHEN?

By the recommended deadline of **October 13, 2020.**

DIDN'T GET YOUR BALLOT IN TIME?

No worries. Get a *Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot* (FWAB) from FVAP.gov.

WANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR BALLOT WAS RECEIVED?

Check the status at FVAP.gov.

THAT'S IT. YOU'RE AN OVERSEAS VOTER
GET MORE INFO AND ASSISTANCE AT FVAP.GOV

SWITCH TO DIRECT DEPOSIT FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS

The U.S. federal government strongly encourages federal benefit recipients to choose direct deposit. Direct deposit is the safest, cheapest, and most reliable method of receiving your benefits. The payment is electronically transmitted to your bank account and you have access to your funds, eliminating the risk of missing or stolen checks.

The Embassy will continue to receive all federal benefits checks and hold them for pickup. However, to avoid problems with physical checks, the U.S. government encourages federal benefit recipients to choose direct deposit. Please contact your corresponding federal agency for assistance.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS):

Consider choosing direct deposit when filing your annual tax return to expedite receipt of any refund. Visit the [IRS' website](#) for instructions on how to sign up for direct deposit.

Veteran's Affairs (VA) :

Visit the [Veteran's Affairs website](#) for instructions on how to sign up for direct deposit.

LOOKING AHEAD

- September 7 - October 4: Absentee Voting Week
- October 11: Columbus Day (Embassy Closed)
- October 29: The Prophet's Birthday (Embassy Closed)
- November 19: Veterans' Day (Embassy Closed)
- November 26: Thanksgiving (Embassy Closed)
- December 24: Christmas (Embassy Closed)



WAYS TO COPE WITH STRESS

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body.
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
 - Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals
 - Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

WRITE TO US!

Do you have have questions? Want to see something included in our next newsletter? We'd love to hear from you! All inquiries and thoughts can be sent to KuwaitACS@state.gov.



CONNECT WITH US!

The Embassy recommends American citizens in Kuwait to register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), follow the Embassy on social media, and monitor the Embassy's COVID-19 information page for the latest information.



step.state.gov



facebook.com/USEmbassyQ8



[@usembassyq8](https://www.instagram.com/usembassyq8)



kw.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information